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SIERRA NEVADA ALLIANCE FOR PEACE

Inyo and Mono Counties, California P.O. Box 132, Bishop, CA 93514

NEWSLETTER "Let us take the risks of peace upon our lives, October, 1989
Volume 3, Number 5 not impose the risks of war upon the world." --- Quaker proverb Editor: Bob Jellison

Soviet Scientist Returns to the Owens Valley

Boris Kazak, a Soviet seismologist, is currently visiting in the Eastern Sierra. Some of you may remember Boris from his visit to this area in 1988 as part of a team of scientists investigating the seismic detection of nuclear blasts. This current trip is on an unofficial basis as he and his family visit with friends in the area made on past trips. The following is excerpted from a recent conversation between Boris and Bob Jellison of Bishop.

Bob: I understand this is a pleasure trip for you and your family. Our peace group is interested in promoting citizen exchanges. Were there any difficulties in arranging this trip and what could a group like ours do to help Soviet citizens visit the US?

Boris: This is just a private visit made possible by invitation by people I got to know last year when I visited here with a team of seismologists. Due to general relaxation in the relationship between our two countries it was fairly easy for me to arrange for this visit. Would it be two years earlier, this would not be possible for me to accept this invitation because our officials accepted only as legal invitations from relatives. Since I have no relatives in the US, it would be impossible for me to visit if the invitation was from a friend or even a colleague. But now all the situation has changed. The invitation from anybody is sufficient in order to begin the procedures of making an official appeal for passports, airplane tickets, and visas.

Bob: Our group is interested in arms control measures between the two countries, can you tell us in general terms what the relevance of your work was to arms control?

Boris: I can tell you in the most general terms as I understand it. The problem is that scientific people have their minds not made in the same way as political people. Scientific people don't have in their vocabulary such words as "belief" or "non-belief". They have the words, "I know" or "I don't know". If I know, I know the scientifically established facts. In this case I have some type of theory and experimentally determined facts. Well, what we had in the situation two years before. Each side -- the Soviet side and the American side -- accused each other of cheating. Soviet military and politicians said they could not trust the scientific data from the United States. The American government said they could not trust the seismological data collected in the Soviet Union. The scientific community was enraged, since they trust one another and knew the data from the two sides to be accurate and correct. The only way to convince the military on both sides was to put two sets of equipment side by side. In '87 it was done at our test site in Khazakhstan, in '88 it was done near the test site in Nevada. The blasts, chemical blasts, were organized to study the propagation of seismic signals through the rocks at the test site. Two sets of equipment put at the same site, one American and one Soviet, produced identical data. It doesn't depend on the particular kind of equipment. The results were excellent. We know the general structure and the propogation properties of the rocks at Khazakhstan and ... at the Nevada Test Site. ...So now the facts are clear and it is a good base for the politicians for working out a treaty.

Bob: Do you see any impediments to arms control?

Boris: Yes, there are many of them. You see, it is not the arms control, but the arms reductions that matters. When the arms are reduced you don't feel any more need for so many military people in your country. You are tempted to fire them -- and they don't like it.

Bob: Currently we are seeing dramatic changes in Eastern Europe. How do you interpret these changes?

Boris: They are difficult to interpret. They are reverting to just a normal economic system....In the political sense they opened the way for a multiparty system. It seems that our country will go the same way but on a slower pace.

Bob: It was reported in the papers today that Shervanadze said Warsaw Pact countries could choose their own alliances.

continued on next page

NEXT SNAP MEETING

Potluck Dinner, Sunday, Nov. 5th, 6:00 pm

Place: the Scheidlinger's, 393 Mt. Tom Rd., Bishop
Call 873-8439 for directions.

Potluck: 6:00-7:00 pm **Meeting**: 7:00-9:00 pm

At its last meeting, the Steering Committee decided to return to having a monthy SNAP meeting and newsletter. Two topics were discussed which the committee felt that SNAP should focus on in the coming year. The first is a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTB), an issue that we have delt with a lot in the past. Sometime in 1990, probably in the spring, there will be a CTB Amendment Conference. This was called for by 41 countries which are signatories to the Partial Test Ban Treaty. The US, USSR, and Britain must be in favor of it for the CTB Amendment to pass. The Soviets have already declared their support of a CTB. We must convince our government to end its opposition. The other focus would be to investigate person-to-person contacts with Soviet citizens, such as a sister city or student exchanges. At our november meeting we will present information on these topics and discuss what actions we can take.

Boris: You see, it was not the good will of Shervanadze. Simply that there is not enough force to keep them together.

Bob: Many people within our own group have travelled to the test site to protest continued nuclear testing....

Boris: Our test site is also circled by the protestants. Many people protest our nuclear testing in Khazakstan. There are many medical activists and environmental activists who call for the unilateral stopping of nuclear testing.

Bob: Do you see any reasons for not banning nuclear testing completely?

Boris: No, I don't see any reasons. The only question in banning nuclear testing would be that many military programs would be mandatorily stopped. For example, scientific research for controlled laser beams in space powered by nuclear explosions.

Bob: Star Wars?

Boris: Yes, Star Wars or something like it would stop. Military people don't like this because they have already invested much money.

Bob: Has military strategy changed in the Soviet Union?

Boris: I think that now we are beginning to understand that we are sitting in the same boat. If anybody makes a hole in the bottom of the boat, both sides will drown.

Bob: What would you like to say to Owens Valley residents?

Boris: What can I say? Best wishes and I hope that your stereotypes of the bad Russian and the "Evil Empire" and our stereotypes of Uncle Sam, proud and selfish and snobbish, they will break and we will see real people.

Legislative Report and Action Alerts

FY1990 Defense Authorization Bill

In May of this year, the House and the Senate completed action on their respective versions of the FY90 Defense Authorization Bill. This bill allocates Pentagon funding for the fiscal year of 1990. The two versions of the bill had substantial differences; the House significantly challanged Bush's defense priorities while the Senate virtually gave him complete support. When action on the bills had been completed, a joint House/Senate Conference Committee met to resolve the two different bills. After weeks of deadlock the committee has moved towards narrowing the differences between House and Senate versions of the bill. Summaries of probable authorizations are as follows:

Star Wars: The House had cut funding of SDI to $3.1 billion while the Senate approved $4.5 billion. The conferees will probably split the difference between the House and Senate levels of funding which would allocate approximately $3.8 billion for 1990

MX rail garrison and Midgetman missles: The House bill called for $600 million for the MX and a cut of all funding for the Midgetman, while the Senate bill approved $1.1 billon for the MX and $100 million for the Midgetman. The conferees may agree on one overall figure for both the MX and Midgetman missles and let the Administration decide how much of that to spend on each program.

B-2 (Stealth) Bomber: The house had approved $3.76 billion for the Stealth and the Senate had approved $4.43 billion. An agreement may be reached to allocate about $4 billion for two Stealth bombers and for components of four more bombers.

Portions of the House language which place specific restrictions on future spending for the Stealth may be adopted. The defense appropriations bill conference committee will meet upon conclusion of the authorization bill conference; this committee will probably closely follow the agreements of the authorization committee.

Action Request

While both the House and the Senate have exhibited a business as usual attitude towards defense spending, a number of members of Congress have shown more creativity by formulating an alternative comprehensive budget plan for 1991. Thier plan, termed the "Budget for a Strong America" has the active support of a broad range of national interest groups including several arms control organizations. Call the following aides for further information and to commend the representatives involved with the plan: Peter Kovar with Rep. Barney Frank and Drew Littmar with Rep. Barbara Boxer. The number for the House switchboard is 202-225-3121.

SNAP Potluck & Meeting

Sunday, November 5th, 6:00 pm.
393 Mt. Tom View Rd., Bishop

Steering Committee Meeting

Tuesday, November 14th, 6:30 pm
At 16A Dixon Lane, Bishop, call 873-6445

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